DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 161 328 HE 010 540

AUTHOR Kells, H. R.; Kirkwood, Robert
TITLE Analysis of a Major Body of Institutional Research Studies Conducted in the Northeast, 1972-1977: Implications for Future Research.
PUB DATE 12 Oct 78
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Northeast Association for Institutional Research meeting (State College, Pennsylvania, October 2, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Administration; *College Programs; Comparative Analysis; *Educational Assessment; Evaluation Needs; Geographic Regions; Higher Education; *Institutional Characteristics; *Institutional Research; *Research Needs; Self Evaluation; Surveys; Trend Analysis
IDENTIFIERS Educational Outcomes; Institutional Evaluation

ABSTRACT

An analysis was conducted of over 200 self-study processes undertaken during 1971-77 as part of the institutional accreditation process in the Middle States region. Coordinators of 247 self-study projects were surveyed to secure facts and opinions about institutional characteristics, self-study process characteristics, and satisfaction with the process. It appeared that two thirds of the institutions were either advised to or had to use comprehensive studies, because ongoing study at the institution was limited. No institution could rely on its present institutional research capacity to stand in lieu of fresh study initiative. Curriculum (or program-related studies) was the area chosen for study most often, governance studies, goal achievement (outcomes) studies, and studies of student services were next. The publicly-sponsored institutions did significantly more studies of institutional capacity, student services and remedial education, and less financial studies. The associate degree institutions did no financial studies, much more in the student services area, and very much more in the remedial-developmental areas. At least one type of outcome study was undertaken by 88 percent of the institutions. The most popular types of outcome studies were the alumni followup, attrition/retention study, and studies in which students were asked to respond concerning programs and services. There was a low level of study regarding student development areas in both the cognitive and affective domains. Suggestions are offered for areas that need more attention by institutional research programs at colleges and universities. (SW)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY H. R. Kells
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

ED161328

Paper presented at the meeting of the Northeast Association for Institutional Research, State College, Pennsylvania, October 12, 1978

# Analysis of a Major Body of Institutional Research Studies Conducted in the Northeast, 1972-1977: Implications for Future Research

H. R. Kells and Robert Kirkwood

Several things prompted the analysis which will be described here. The first is the somewhat discouraging realization that despite the much described growth of institutional research capacity in this country in the last ten to fifteen years, there may be something wrong with the primary focus if not the basic conceptualization of such efforts. For the past decade, these authors have worked with several hundred institutions at the point where they were embarking on major attempts to study themselves - with the current institutional research capacity and resultant information as the point of departure. This has been a disheartening experience. The vast majority of institutional research functions appeared to us, and to the institutional leaders with whom we also consulted, to be primarily <u>administrative</u> research organizations - not <u>institutional</u> in the sense that systematic study of programs and student development were at least as important in the scheme of things. We rarely found goal clarification, program effectiveness, institutional goal achievement (outcome) studies, and the like as a major, well developed and valued function of these offices and efforts - and somehow we expected that by the mid-1970's that we would find these things.

---

H. R. Kells is Professor of Higher Education at Rutgers University. Robert Kirkwood is Executive Director of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. This project was supported by funds provided by the Rutgers University Research Council, the Rutgers Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The authors are grateful for this support and for the assistance of Leny Struminger for computer programming and data processing assistance, and of Laura Kells and Eleanor Kells for manuscript preparation.

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

HE 010 540

Second, we are concerned that the search for new institutional research responses - or profiles of activity - will not be a search at all. It may just be a reactive process rather than the kind of proactive stance we would hope for from an institutional research function. So we became quite interested in what it is that institutions are studying on a continuing basis, as part of a general interest in how major institutional self-study projects are conducted and how these projects can be improved.

We had the opportunity to conduct a major retrospective analysis during 1977-78 of over two hundred self-study processes conducted during the 1971 to 1977 period as part of the institutuional accreditation process in the Middle States region. Using an instrument which was developed and pre-tested with seven institutions in the fall of 1977, (See Figure 1), we surveyed the coordinators of 247 self-study projects to secure facts and opinions about institutional characteristics, self-study process characteristics, and satisfaction with the process. Seventy variables were included in these three categories. We received an 84% response to the survey from the full range of institutional types in the region. As far as we could tell it was a representative and unbiased response. (See Figure 2). The major findings about the self-study processes, satisfaction data and characteristics which appeared to be significantly associated with satisfaction were reported in September at the 4th Annual OECD-IMHE conference in Paris and will be presented in some detail in a major article this fall (1).

What was not presented in any detail in the initial reports is what we wish to present here for the audience best prepared to do something about what we think are some very interesting patterns of institutional study or apparent lack thereof. We sought by analysing this particular data base to examine the following questions:

Figure 1

Middle States Commission on Higher Education
Self-Study Research Project

SURVEY CONCERNING EXPERIENCE WITH INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY
AND RELATED MATTERS 1972-1977

[ ]

(for non-response
follow-up purposes only)

This instrument seeks to gather systematically and anonymously from institutions in the MSA region which have conducted institutional self-studies and which have been reviewed for accreditation purposes during the period July, 1972 to June, 1977, facts about and reactions to the self-study process employed, the perceived impact of the process, and suggestions for future processes. We are asking the person who acted as steering committee chairperson or who coordinated the self-study (or some other knowledgeable person) to complete the instrument and forward it back to the MSA Commission on Higher Education in the stamped, addressed envelope provided. The Commission needs your participation in order to improve the effectiveness of the institutional self-study in our region.

* * * * * * * * *

1. Was your institution aware at the start of the self-study that the MSA Commission on Higher Education is willing to consider the use of various approaches to self-study as your institution prepared for the accreditation review?

   Yes ( )1
   No ( )2
   Don't Know ( )3

2. Had your institution selected a self-study form before a Commission staff person visited the institution? (keep in mind that institutions preparing for initial accreditation must use a comprehensive approach)

   Yes ( )1
   No ( )2
   Don't Know ( )3

3. Did the staff person suggest the use or further encourage the consideration of other than a comprehensive approach?

   Yes ( )1
   No ( )2
   Don't Know ( )3

4. Did the institution respond favorably (accept the advice) to that suggestion?

   Yes ( )1
   No ( )2
   N/A ( )3

5. In what year did your institution initiate its self-study?

   1971 ( )1
   1972 ( )2
   1973 ( )3
   1974 ( )4
   1975 ( )5
   1976 ( )6

6. What general form was chosen for self-study?

   (see back of cover page for definitions)

   Check (✓) one:

   Comprehensive self-study . . . . . ( )1
   Comprehensive but with one or more special emphases. . . . . ( )2
   Selected topics approach . . . . . ( )3
   Current special study approach . . . . . ( )4
   Regular institutional research approach. . . . . ( )5

(64 other items followed)

(1) What does analysis of the results of self-study form and comprehensiveness appear to indicate about the breadth of regular institutional research capacity at the 208 respondent institutions of all kinds?

(2) What can we learn about priorities for study from examining the profile of specific studies conducted when institutions had a choice of study topics?

(3) What appears to be the interest of institutions in specific goal achievement (outcome) studies, particularly regarding student development, and especially in light of apparent institutional missions?

(4) How does any of the above relate to major institutional characteristics, to the perceived primary motivation for the major self-study process conducted, and to the perceived satisfaction with that process?

(5) What do the answers to the first four questions tell us about IR needs for the future?

Figure 2

Characteristics of the Respondent Group

Response rate = 84%

| Characteristic | Universe* (n=247) % | Respondent Group (n=208) % | Non-Respondents (n=39) % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sponsorship | | | |
| Public | 38 | 38 | 44 |
| Private | 62 | 62 | 56 |
| Highest Degree Offered | | | |
| Associate | 27 | 26 | 26 |
| Baccalaureate | 29 | 33 | 34 |
| Masters | 28 | 19 | 21 |
| Doctorate | 17 | 18 | 18 |
| Other | not avail. | 3 | 2 |
| Size | | | |
| 5000 or less | 69 | 71 | 60 |
| More than 5000 (students) | 31 | 29 | 40 |

*Universe comprised of all institutions in the Middle States region which conducted self-study processes during the 1971-1977 period in preparation for reaffirmation of accreditation.

Results

Apparent Institutional Research Capacity.

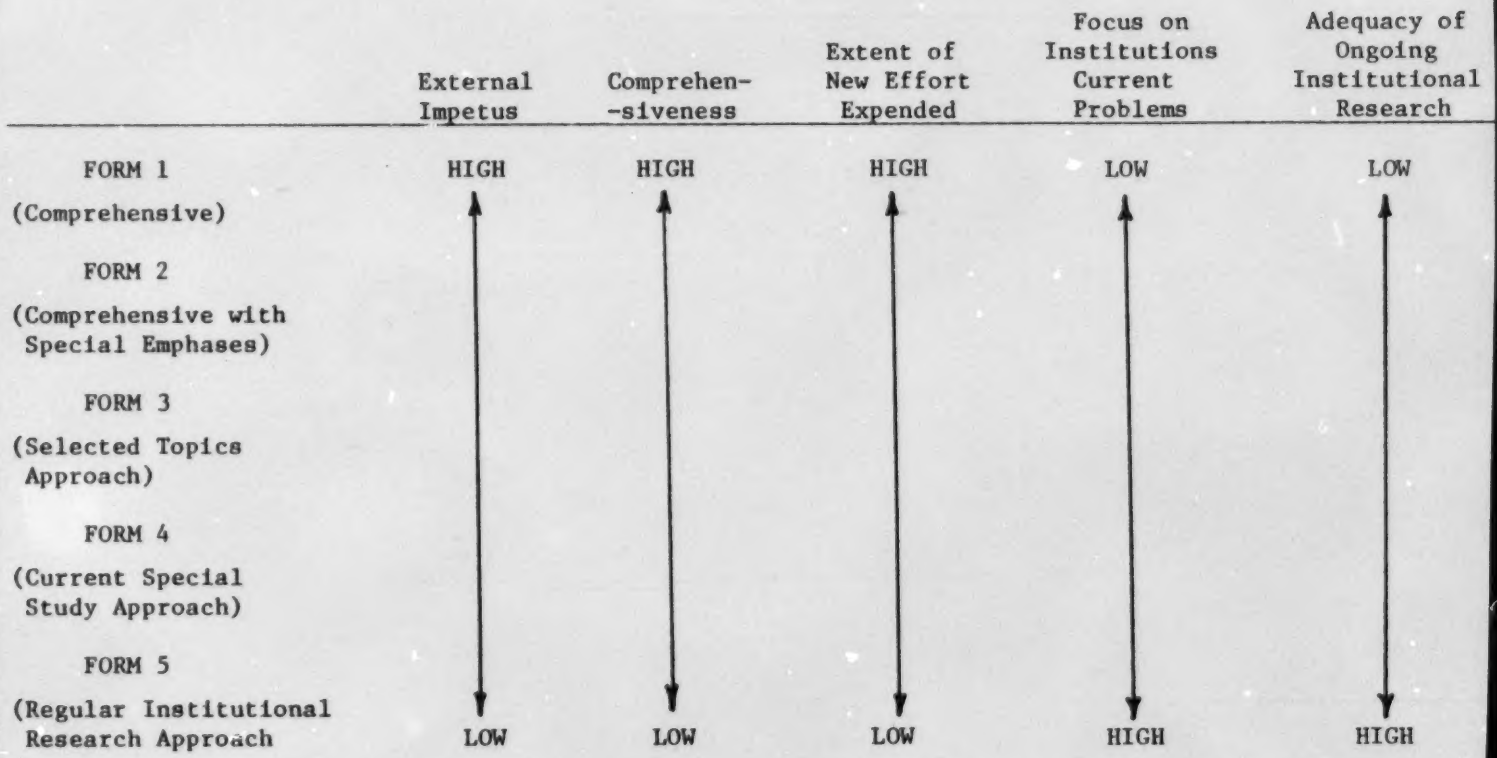
Our findings which relate to the present (and recent) capacity of institutions of all descriptions to study themselves broadly and effectively on an on-going basis as evidenced by the ready availability of basic comprehensive IR data are not encouraging.

Figure (3) describes the five available, sanctioned forms of self-study process available for use by institutions as they begin an institutional accreditation-related self-study in the Middle States region (these are now also used entirely or in part in other regions; see Kells, 1972). In general, as an institution's choice moves from Form 1 to Form 5 it is in response to a perceived and externally recognized increase in the institution's capacity for and current activity in institutional research and self-analysis. Also as is indicated in the chart, the major impetus, comprehensiveness and extent of focus on current problems varies roughly from high to low along this same axis.

What we found was that 49% of the institutions used Form 1, 18% used Form 2, 28% used Form 3, 5% used Form 4 and 0%(!) used Form 5. In other words, it appears that two thirds of the institutions were either advised to or had to use comprehensive studies - because ongoing study at the institution was so limited. Indeed no institution could rely on its present IR capacity to stand in lieu of a fresh study initiative (Form 5). Even when one discounts these figures for those choices toward comprehensiveness which were made for political, training, or other reasons, the record is not good. Let's face it, colleges and universities in these times will not initiate comprehensive, participatory, large study efforts when given a choice to do less, unless they feel that they must study everything from goals to

Figure 3

ATTRIBUTES OF THE FORMS OF SELF-STUDY PROCESSES



outcomes - that is, unless it hasn't been done recently or the data are simply not available. These data seem to say that IR capacity, the scope of IR efforts, and the ongoing nature of serious institutional self-evaluation are quite embryonic at American institutions. We would be less disturbed if these findings didn't jibe with our personal experience over the past decade.

Areas Chosen for Study

The second aspect of this general problem we examined concerned the choices institutions made for special studies during a period of concentrated institutional study. In the 106 institutions which chose less than fully comprehensive self-study plans and which chose the areas or problems for study, it is clear that we are not examining the usual level of institutional research (IR) activity at the institutions but rather the approximate reciprocal of that activity. That is, the areas or problems were not necessarily in the priority the IR director would assign, but instead were selected by a group of appointed and/or elected self-study organizers according to what they felt the institution needed to look at. Admittedly, political influences or public relations concerns as well as more rational managerial or other processes are involved in these decisions.

As can be seen in the column marked "total" in Figure (4), we found that curriculum (or program-related studies) was the area chosen most often, our old friend governance studies was next, and goal achievement (outcomes) studies and studies of student services were next with about one third of the institutions chosing these areas. In one sense, these data are encouraging. Perhaps only one-third of the institutions felt they had to do outcome studies. Our further analysis showed (see later figures) that the outcomes studies conducted were very much a partial profile. Discouragingly little work is being done in this area at institutions as recently as the

Figure 4

RELATIONSHIP OF CHOICE OF SPECIAL AREAS FOR STUDY TO HIGHEST DEGREE OFFERED AND INSTITUTIONAL SPONSORSHIP (n=106)

| Areas of Study | (1) Assoc. | (2) Bacc. | (3) Masters | (4) Doct. | Significance* | Public | Private | Signif.* | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Financial Problems or Projections | 0% (-) | 36% (+) | 29% (+) | 21% (=) | (1),(2)+(3),(4) 0.001* | 2% (-) | 35% (+) | 0.000* | 19% |
| Governance | 29% (-) | 36% | 43% | 52% (+) | n.s.d. | 36% | 42% | n.s.d. | 40% |
| Institutional Research Capacity | 14% | 7% | 14% | 10% | n.s.d. | 18% (+) | 6% (-) | 0.045* | 11% |
| Goal Achievement (outcomes) Studies | 41% | 46% | 57% (+) | 21% (-) | n.s.d. | 30% | 46% | n.s.d. | 38% |
| Curriculum or Program | 62% | 64% | 57% (-) | 79% (+) | n.s.d. | 67% | 67% | n.s.d. | 67% |
| Student Services | 53% (+) | 32% | 29% | 31% | (1),vs.(2)+(3)+(4) 0.031* | 50% (+) | 27% (-) | 0.017* | 38% |
| Enrollment/Admissions | 15% | 14% | 29% (+) | 14% | n.s.d. | 18% | 13% | n.s.d. | 16% |
| Remedial/Developmental Education | 38% (+) | 4% (-) | 14% (=) | 3% (-) | 0.000* | 32% (+) | 2% (-) | 0.000* | 16% |
| General Educ./Rel'n. to Career Educ. | 15% | 21% | 7% | 10% | n.s.d. | 14% | 13% | n.s.d. | 14% |
| Organization | 18% (-) | 32% | 50% (+) | 38% | n.s.d. | 32% | 33% | n.s.d. | 32% |
| Fund Raising/Fin'l. Development | 3% | 7% | 7% | 0% | n.s.d. | 0% | 7% | n.s.d. | 4% |
| Faculty Development | 18% | 25% | 14% | 17% | n.s.d. | 22% | 15% | n.s.d. | 19% |
| Library/Learning Resources | 15% | 18% | 7% (-) | 21% | n.s.d. | 16% | 16% | n.s.d. | 16% |
| Long-Range Planning | 24% (-) | 43% | 57% (+) | 35% | n.s.d. | 32% | 38% | n.s.d. | 36% |

*Kruskal-Wallis Test. Signif. =or< 0.050

mid-1970's. By the same token, if two thirds of the institutions felt they had to do programmatic studies, perhaps these data confirm that IR has perforce focused primarily on administrative, financial, enrollment (only one institution of six chose this area) and related areas in recent years. When given a choice, the mandate and cooperation from most sectors, IR officers and academic line officers chose the neglected areas - those things they really wanted to get at - but really didn't have a chance to do during the usual work year.

We examined these chosen areas of study by major institutional characteristics and as they relate to reported major motivation for study and perceived satisfaction with the self-study process. We found almost no variation with institutional size. Only small colleges showed one disproportionate emphasis - financial studies, as you might expect. When we sorted the data by major disciplinary profile (totally liberal arts to totally career/professional) we found no variation except one area of study. The totally liberal arts institutions did proportionately more outcomes studies and the totally career/professional institutions did disproportionately less (a fascinating finding). This is a surprise because of the obvious and often espoused relative ease of looking at competency levels and the like in career areas (compared to liberal arts). Well, the more process-oriented, relatively externally (guild) oriented and/or relatively conservative or traditional stance of these institutions and their professionals may be operating here. Goal achievement (outcomes) studies - that is, beyond standard and traditionally low followup studies of graduates - are relatively new and progressive phenomena.

Finally, when sorted by highest degree level and sponsorship of institution (where purpose/goal differences are heavily expressed) we found three or four significant differences. The publicly sponsored institutions did significantly more studies of IR capacity (!), student services and remedial education (not expected), and less financial studies. The associate degree institutions did

no financial studies, much more in the student services area, and of course very much more in the remedial-developmental areas. The only surprises here seem to be the IR emphasis for public institutions (here money might be "talking") and the low emphasis on studies of remediation at other than associate degree schools and in the private sector. This is especially so since struggling private, mostly baccalaureate-level institutions have greatly widened the admissions net, since attrition is a very costly item for these institutions and since the pressure for basic skills studies is still very much with us. These data may change dramatically in the next five years.

When we examined the choice of studies in light of motivation for the study and the perceived satisfaction with the overall process (See Figure 5) two generally interesting aspects are revealed. First, it seems that IR, goal achievement, student service-related, faculty development, learning resources and planning studies are generally positively related to internally motivated studies as opposed to externally ("we do it because some agency says we must") generated self-study. Second, IR goal achievement, student services, enrollment, general education organization, and learning resources studies are related more or less to perceived improvement and perceived usefulness of the overall self-study - with some of these relating positively to both satisfaction measures.

Goal Achievement (Outcomes) Studies

The final area examined concerned the vital area of goal achievement or "outcomes" studies. Part of the survey instrument asked the respondent to identify in some detail (using a check list plus open-ended item) the specific outcomes studies conducted during the intensive 6-24 month period of institutional self-study in question.

Figure 5

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED PRIMARY MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION WITH OVERALL SELF-STUDY... AND AREAS CHOSEN FOR STUDY

| | Motivation | | Satisfaction | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Areas Chosen For Study | External | Internal | Improvement | Useful |
| Financial Matters | N.R. | N.R. | (+) | N.R. |
| Governance | (+) | N.R. | N.R. | N.R. |
| IR Capacity | (-) | (+) | (+) | (-) |
| Goal Achievement (Outcomes Studies) | (-) | (+) | (+) | N.R. |
| Curric. or Program | N.R. | (+) | N.R. | N.R. |
| Student Services | (-) | (++) | (++) | N.R. |
| Enrollment/Admiss. | (-) | (+) | (+) | (+) |
| Remedial/Devel. Ed. | (+) | N.R. | (+) | (+) |
| Organization | (-) | N.R. | (+) | (+) |
| Fund Raising | N.R. | N.R. | N.R. | N.R. |
| Faculty Development | N.R. | (+) | N.R. | (+) |
| Library/Lrng. Res. | N.R. | (+) | (+) | (+) |
| Long Range Planning | (-) | (+) | N.R. | N.R. |

Key: N.R. = Expected proportions (no relationship) found.
(+) = Slight positive relationship found; (++) stronger positive, etc.
(-) = Slight negative relationship found.

The first interesting finding (see Figure 6) is that 88% of the institutions reported doing at least one type of outcome study. This reflects high interest and perhaps relatively low ongoing IR capacity in this area. Of interest also is the general profile of studies. Notice that the most popular types of outcome studies were the alumni followup, attrition/retention study (implicitly called for in most collegiate goal statements) and, surprisingly, studies in which students were asked to respond concerning programs and services. The latter is a welcome trend, and one which these authors have sensed emerging gradually in the last ten years. What is both somewhat understandable and somewhat discouraging is the low level of study regarding the all important (and goal emphasized) student development areas - in both the cognitive and affective domains. Perhaps understandable, although in the long run inexcusable, is the low level of study concerning higher order cognitive

Figure 6

PERCENTAGE OF INSTITUTIONS CONDUCTING SPECIFIC GOAL ACHIEVEMENT (OUTCOMES) STUDIES AS RELATED TO INSTITUTIONAL SIZE

| (n=208) Type of Study | Size of Student Body (1) 0-1000 | (2) 1001-5000 | (3) 5001-15000 | (4) 15000 | All Inst'ns. | Significance* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Institution Did Any Goal Achievement (Outcomes) Studies | 92% | 91% | 82% | 76% | 88% | (1)+(2)vs(3)+(4) 0.021* |
| Alumni Followup Studies | 71% | 74% | 61% | 57% | 69% | (1)+(2)vs(3)+(4) 0.052* |
| Attrition/Retention Studies | 71% | 73% | 58% | 57% | 68% | (1)+(2)vs(3)+(4) 0.038* |
| Student Development | | | | | | |
| Basic Skills | 37% | 35% | 34% | 38% | 36% | n.s.d. |
| Higher Order Cognitive Skills | 25% | 10% | 5% | 19% | 14% | (1)vs(2)+(3)vs(4) 0.014* |
| Subject Matter (Knowledge) | 46% | 21% | 24% | 24% | 28% | (1)vs(2)+(3)+(4) 0.001* |
| Vocational/Career Skills | 12% | 17% | 8% | 19% | 14% | n.s.d. |
| Personal Development | 37% | 24% | 24% | 29% | 27% | n.s.d. |
| Opinions of Students About Programs or Services | 64% | 66% | 68% | 67% | 66% | n.s.d. |

*Kruskal-Wallis Test (=or<0.05)

skills (evaluation, synthesis, critical thinking) which are costly and difficult, and studies of personal development (similarly difficult). The goal statements of American colleges are ringing in our ears, however, particularly regarding intended impacts in these areas.

Less understandable is the low level of study in the basic skill, disciplinary knowledge, and vocational/career skills areas. These omissions are critical and need no further explanation here. In case you are wondering, our on-site multi-campus experience does not indicate that these low frequencies are evidence that regular IR efforts provide these data. Generally, they do not.

We did examine these data by major institutional characteristics, motivation for study, and satisfaction. There are important differences by institutional size. Generally, a greater proportion of smaller institutions did outcomes studies than did larger ones, and they seemed to do more in some specific areas. In general, there was no difference by disciplinary profile, except for the fact that totally career/professional institutions, once again, did proportionately less outcomes studies. When one sorted by highest degree level (see Figure 7) the doctoral level institutions (some would say understandably - because of purported higher student input quality) showed a lower level of outcomes studies. Also, associate and baccalaureate institutions seemed to be doing disproportionately more than the masters and doctorate level institutions.

We looked at the outcomes studies by year, seeking any patterns of interest over time. Only the attrition/retention studies showed any trend (upward), and that started in 1975.

Finally (see Figure 8) internally motivated self-studies seemed to employ more outcomes studies, and some of the specific types, most prominently basic skill studies, disciplinary knowledge studies, and opinions from students, seemed to relate positively to perceived satisfaction with the overall self-study. These are encouraging findings.

Figure 7

PERCENTAGE OF INSTITUTIONS CONDUCTING SPECIFIC GOAL ACHIEVEMENT (OUTCOMES) STUDIES AS RELATED TO DEGREE LEVEL OF INSTITUTION

| (n=208) Type of Study | Highest Degree Offered (1) Assoc. | (2) Bacc. | (3) Masters | (4) Doct. | All Inst'ns. | Significance* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Institution Did Any Goal Achievement (Outcome) Studies | 96% | 94% | 83% | 71% | 88% | (1)+(2)vs(3)+(4) 0.000* |
| Alumni Followup Studies | 86% | 77% | 63% | 37% | 69% | (1)+(2)vs(3)+(4) 0.001* |
| Attrition/Retention Studies | 78% | 77% | 60% | 50% | 68% | (1)+(2)vs(3)+(4) 0.001* |
| Student Development | | | | | | |
| Basic Skills | 56% | 38% | 20% | 24% | 36% | 0.001* |
| Higher Order Cognitive Skills | 9% | 19% | 15% | 8% | 14% | n.s.d. |
| Subject Matter (Knowledge | 20% | 39% | 28% | 18% | 28% | 0.050* |
| Vocational/Career Skills | 20% | 16% | 13% | 5% | 14% | n.s.d. |
| Personal Development | 20% | 38% | 30% | 16% | 27% | 0.049* |
| Opinions of Students About Programs or Services | 78% | 73% | 55% | 50% | 66% | 0.001* |

*Kruskal-Wallis Test (=or < 0.05)

Figure 8

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CONDUCT OF GOAL ACHIEVEMENT (OUTCOMES) STUDIES AND MOTIVATION OF AND SATISFACTION WITH THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

| (n=208) Type of Study | Perceived Primary Motivation | | Satisfaction Measures | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | External | Internal | Perceived Improvement | Perceived Usefulness |
| Institution Did Any Goal Achievement (Outcome) Studies | = | + | = | = |
| Alumni Followup Studies | = | + | = | = |
| Attrition/Retention Studies | - | + | = | + |
| Student Development | | | | |
| Basic Skills | - | + | + | ++ |
| Higher Order Cognitive Skills | - | = | = | + |
| Subject Matter (Knowledge) | - | = | ++ | ++ |
| Vocational/ Career Skills | - | = | ++ | = |
| Personal Development | = | + | = | ++ |
| Opinions of Students About Programs or Services | = | + | ++ | + |

Key: (=) no relationship; (+) disproportionately higher incidence;
(-) disproportionately lower

Summary

We have found evidence that continuous, broadly conceived institutional research is not as highly developed as many people had hoped or assumed. Particularly lacking is the broad scale continuous use of goal achievement

(outcomes) studies, particularly in the critical area of student development in both the cognitive and affective areas. There are patterns of relationships with institutional size, sponsorship, disciplinary profile - some understandable and some unexpected. Finally, it seems that internally motivated self-studies are the most encouraging climates for the development and use of some critically important, improvement-oriented and usefully perceived study capacities.

Suggestions For the Future

It would seem that the following areas need much more attention by institutional research programs at American colleges and universities:

1. A strong focus on goal clarification and development as a basis for both goal achievement (outcomes) studies and other aspects of improvement and planning efforts;
2. A broadly conceived, and greatly expanded effort to develop locally useful methods to study goal achievement, and then increased efforts to collect, interpret and use this information for institutional improvement;
3. More efforts to systematically assess perceived institutional dysfunction as a guide to improvement efforts. Faculty, staff and student perceptions systematically, anonymously, and skillfully gathered could lead to the kind of survey-guided organizational development efforts widely used in industrial and other areas.
4. Program effectiveness studies based on a combination of program goal achievement (outcome) studies and problem assessment need more emphasis.

References

1. H.R. Kells and Robert Kirkwood, "Institutional Self-Evaluation Processes at Colleges and Universities: A Major Retrospective Analysis", Presented at the Fourth General Conference of the OECD Program on Institutional Management in Higher Education, September 12, 1978, Paris, France.
2. H. R. Kells, "Institutional Accreditation: New Forms of Self-Study," Educational Record, Spring 1972, pp 143-148.